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supply their Badaga partners when they find it is the bezoar, a hairy ball that accumulates in the paunch of some buffaloes. Eating a little of this is believed to make a baby strong, brave and manly; and so all Badagas—whether vegetarian or not, and even though quite cognizant of its polluting origin—feed some of it to their newborn sons.

Some Kotas are adept carpenters. In the days when Badagas were still using ploughs they obtained these from their Kota partners, who had made them from some wood supplied by the Toda partners of the Badagas. Kota men sometimes made the heavy wooden pounding-stick found in all Badaga households: in this case the wood was first obtained from the jungle slopes by the Kurumbas of one particular settlement, who passed it on to the Toda who had asked them for it. This Toda would then give the timber to the Toda partner of the Badaga needing the pounder. He in turn passed it on to the Badaga's Kota partner to whittle into a pounder. This is the most complex traditional network we know of in the Nilgiris.

Kota partners were also employed to help build houses or cattlesheds for their Badaga partners. In this case, too, if the Badaga's Toda partner were a relatively affluent man he would supply timber for the purpose. If the Kota were an affluent man he might give food to his own helpers who carried the timber from the Toda source. Similarly, the Badaga partner might get the timber that was needed for a Kota's house. There was in fact considerable flexibility in these intertribal connexions.

When a Badaga house is being built the Kota partner has to place a piece of iron in the foundations to drive away bad spirits; ghosts and demons abhor iron (as elsewhere across the Old World). A comparable ritual at the completion of a new Badaga cattleshed requires that the owner's Kota partner bring a crowbar and lay it across the threshold over which the first cow[7] to enter must step.

The Badagas very literally hold a house-warming ceremony in a newly built house, when the hearth is first built. The Kota partner of the owner must also attend this, bringing a new pot with him. This is essential, for grain has to be boiled in it during the ritual. Another Kota will also be less directly involved in this ceremony, as the mother's brother of the house owner also has to bring another pot for the same purpose from *his* Kota partner.

Until this century Kota men were usually requested to thatch Badaga houses. This service has, however, been discontinued: in

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clarified butter and sweet flag. All but the last two are grown in the plains and bought in the bazaar. Sweet flag is a Nilgiri plant the rhizome of which is dried. These items have to be mixed in particular proportions. The dried ginger is a rhizome one cm. thick; a piece one cm. long is used; also the same amount of sweet flag rhizome; four small pepper seeds; one teaspoonful of the small cumin seeds; three or four cloves; 1/2 cube of sugar; 1/2 teaspoonful of coffee powder; and two teaspoonfuls of clarified butter. Except for the butter, coffee, sugar, and cumin, these items are crushed on an open mortar with a metate-like stone roller. This object, about 20 cms. across, is called *maddare* or *matkallu*, and is used exclusively by Badaga therapists for grinding up medicines. An empty pot is put on the fire, and the cumin seeds roasted in it; when ready, they make a crackling sound. Then about two tumblers of water and the crude sugar are added, and after them the other ground items. As soon as the water boils the coffee powder is added; and when the liquid has half evaporated, it is filtered carefully through a piece of clean white cloth into a tumbler containing the clarified butter. When it has cooled a little this mixture is given to the woman to drink. After that her pains stop if the delivery is not really imminent; or else she has a quick delivery.

4.8. For a week or so before the expected birth the neighbours and other women of the girl's lineage keep an eye on her. When one of them has to go off to the fields to work she first calls to enquire about the health of the expectant woman. As soon as labour starts her parents send messages to all of the neighbouring houses, and also to her husband's house. The latter is supposed to pay the messengers who bring the news to him.

There is generally more than one midwife in each village. There are usually also some girls studying midwifery, so that as the years pass the younger women can take over from the old midwives. No male is allowed to be present at a Badaga birth. Any woman can be there, and generally women who know how to deliver a baby are asked to come, as are the girls who are learning midwifery. There is no rule that small girls should be excluded but they usually are because they may become afraid. For that same reason pregnant women are generally not allowed there. Women who are breast-feeding babies are also strongly advised not to come, since the strong smell may have a bad effect on both mother and child. Despite such warnings some brave nursing mothers may still come,

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844 (853) generally those who have had several births themselves. Most women in a village want to go and watch a delivery; but it is said to be a sin for any woman watching to leave before the delivery is completed. This is recalled in the saying, "Delivery is like having escaped death," which means that the pain borne by a woman is nearly as much as at death. In the same way, one should never (843) pass a woman in advanced pregnancy, in case she is in labour and needs help. If too many come to the delivery one old woman selects who should stay to help and asks the rest to leave. Those who remain give encouragement to the expectant mother by saying, "Be brave, there won't be any pain." Badagas expect the woman not to cry out; but she will if the pain is too much. "The man who has seen a tiger hunt is scared like a woman just before delivery," runs the proverb, probably in reference to a woman's first delivery.

Usually some eight or ten women attend at a birth, although no more than one of them is likely to be recognized as the midwife. Though it is not compulsory for them to be present they nevertheless come, mainly out of genuine concern for the girl's predicament but also partly because they expect their friends to render similar service when necessary for themselves or their daughters. It is clear 844 that enmity among Badaga families does not particularly concern 578 the women, because even if a family is not on speaking terms with that of the pregnant girl, a woman from the "enemy" family will still attend at the birth; or if that is not possible will come to her father's house afterwards to enquire after her—as indeed would a male of this "enemy" household. Such an "enemy" neighbour woman will not eat food provided by the girl's father while she attends at the birth, but she may well accept food provided by the girl's husband and take it home to eat. The thinking behind (858) this pattern of behaviour is that the girl—at least when she was an unmarried child living in her father's house—was common to the whole village. Badaga children are always viewed in this light, rather than as exclusively members of particular families.

844 Male relatives of the woman wait outside on the veranda or the street, and if there are difficulties they will offer advice or fetch other women to help. Generally the husband of the woman is (846) amongst these men. There is nothing in particular that he should be doing; and Badagas have never practised the *couvade*. It is her husband who must meet all expenses associated with the birth, even though it occurs in the home of the woman's father. Clarified

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half, and on each cut surface someone puts fresh cowdung, a blade of Bermuda grass, and some clarified butter. Then an old, experienced woman takes the first half of the lime and runs itdo wn the right side of the baby, not quite touching the body. As she does this she says: "This child belongs to both the father and the mother;" but she does not name the parents. This assertion of joint parentage is the whole point of the ritual. Then the half lime is sucked by the mother, touched to her child's mouth, and thrown away. In the same manner the other half of the lime is then run down the left side of the baby, the same pronouncement made, and the mother sucks the lime, touches it to the baby's mouth, and throws it away too. The lime is perhaps intended to ward off evil spirits. If at an unexpected birth no lime is available, the ritual is either done using the leaf of a lime tree, or failing that it is done with the cowdung, grass and clarified butter alone. After this the baby is fed, first from the right breast, then from the left.

Bezoar is a "heat-giving" substance from the stomach of a cow, supposedly the one which leads the herd. A small quantity of it—about as much as a coriander seed—is covered with mother's milk and given to a male infant just after he has drunk milk for the first time. Should there be none available then, the bezoar can also be fed to him on the third, fifth or seventh day of life, and that day must be a Friday, Tuesday, or Sunday. It is believed that this substance will make the boy active, strong, and very brave; it is therefore not given to girls, lest they grow up to disobey their husbands. The biggest bezoar stones are perhaps 2 cm. in diameter. They are found in the stomachs of nearly all cows, especially those which are very healthy or those which are barren. Interestingly, all vegetarian Badagas give this substance to their infants, even though they know it comes from a dead animal. Like all children's medicines, it is now obtainable in the town bazaars, though formerly it was supplied by the Kota tribe; it even comes in "tablet form."

If the woman is actually ill before the delivery, and in half of the other childbirth cases as a precaution, she is given a medicine before drinking the coffee offered her after the birth. An oil called *be:venne*, which comes from the seed of the nim tree, is boiled with some garlic in it, allowed to cool for a while, and then the mother drinks a little and the remainder is rubbed over her head, neck and body. The oil is very "heat-giving." A piece of garlic is tied with

5 CHILD CARE

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"Pacifying the children is no less of a job than digesting the raw flesh of an animal."
(Proverb)

Feeding the Infant

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5.1. In Chapter 4 I have described the actions which immediately follow an infant's arrival in the world. There we saw how the newborn child sucks his mother's breast for the first time, and then swallows a small piece of bezoar. This is only one of several substances that he may be offered in the first few days of life. It has been reported that another buffalo product used to be given a day or two after birth, but its identity is uncertain; some identify it with bezoar, others with asafoetida, which is in fact a resinous vegetable substance. After a few days, when the child's stool is not yellow, some burnt rhizome of the sweet flag is also fed to the baby, mixed with mother's (Jagor 1876: 199). Somewhat later in life children were sometimes taken on pilgrimage to the temple at Ka:ramaḍai, near the eastern foot of the Nilgiris, where they were fed a particularly unsavoury medicinal foodstuff. Here during the annual festival for the goddess Ma:riamma mendicants were given consecrated pieces of banana mixed with crude sugar. These they chewed a little, then spat into the hands or mouths of devotees, who ate this or fed it to their children because it was believed to cure all diseases ("Miles" 1933: 267).

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5.2. Mother's milk is the best food for a baby, better than any animal's milk. The child should be weaned at one year, particularly as the mother may be pregnant again by then. Some mothers naturally have little milk; with others the flow of milk may stop if

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853 the woman is startled, or if she comes into contact with a "bad wind" as we discuss below (5.4). When a nursing mother comes from a family known for its low milk yield she is given butter-milk, made from boiled cow's milk, and with it a rich diet of clarified butter and food made from little millet. She does no hard work and enjoys complete rest. (Nothing is rubbed onto the breast.)

5.3. If a nursing mother is eating irregularly, or having sweet things, or too much food, such behaviour can affect the nature of her milk. To counteract its poorer quality a certain medicine can be given to the child, but only between its fifth and twelfth months (generally just in the fifth and sixth). It is made from two plants, *homogu* and false privet, used in the proportion 2:1 and baked with clarified butter. The material is then ground on a special stone and mixed at the same time with some of the mother's milk. A pinch of salt is usually added. Finally half as much butter as the volume of this mixture is added to it, and the resultant medicine is divided into three parts, each rolled into a ball 2 cms. in diameter. The baby swallows one of these balls on the morning, a second in the evening, and the third the next morning.

If a nursing mother eats too many sweet things, she may transmit worms to her baby through the breast-milk. In fact, small children are much more liable to worms than their mothers. A woman thus may not have worms while her nursing infant does; and if she eats too many sweets in the eighth or ninth month of pregnancy, worms may appear in her child during the first three months of life.

5.4. A nursing mother is regularly afraid that if she goes near a corpse or smells another birth, or if she smells anyone other than her own husband in the early morning who has not yet bathed since coitus the night before, the breasts may cease to give milk. Some are even afraid that a sudden noise will have this effect, and others are afraid of hearing talk of any terrifying subject. This phenomenon of a "bad wind" associated with the polluting aspect of coitus, birth and death works in devious ways. When a newly delivered mother is in the room before another woman's delivery occurs she can stay there and the smell at the time of birth will not affect her; yet if she enters a room where a birth has just occurred the bad odour there can affect the flow of her milk. If an adult dies in her presence her milk is not threatened by a

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"bad wind" unless the death occurred in her own home. The effect of a "bad wind" the woman has encountered can also be felt by her baby or transmitted through the milk to her baby, and then it will make him sick.

One or two days after a wedding the bride, by this time perhaps no longer a virgin, returns on a belief ceremonial visit to her parents' home. As she enters the village the woman accompanying her calls out for people to keep infants and nursing mothers out of sight. The bride can set eyes on unweaned infants, but their parents must make sure that neither the children themselves nor their mothers see the girl, lest their milk dry up by reason of the "bad wind" associated with the girl's recent sexual activity. Were a nursing mother to see the bride she would probably curse her, and this could cause infertility in the latter.

More generally it is felt that the most dangerous "bad wind" would be one associated with a person who came to look at the baby just after having had intercourse. Such a person should first take a bath, then put on some clean clothes and wait at least half-an-hour. In the same way if an apparently pure man comes to visit a baby and he has travelled more than a mile he will bring a "bad wind" with him. He should therefore wait in the yard or on the veranda for a short time before entering the house. In this situation the mother would even wait the appropriate amount of time before bowing to his hand if the visitor were her own father. If a nursing mother is obliged to be near a corpse, she also will take a bath and change afterwards before going near her baby. Should an unweaned baby die all other nursing mothers in the village and neighbouring hamlets are expected to visit the bereaved house before the next sunset. They ask the unfortunate mother how she is feeling. Badagas believe that if any nursing mother who was inregular contact with this woman failed to observe this common courtesy, her own infant would soon become ill. And if such a woman nonetheless does fail to visit she must not set eyes on the bereaved mother again until after the next new or the next full moon. This is said to be because the latter might become envious on seeing the other mother nursing, and her sorrow would somehow affect that woman. The nursing mother who failed in this customary courtesy would be afraid that her breasts would dry up, should she meet the bereaved woman shortly after burial of the dead child.

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853 751 783 A woman affected by a "bad wind" of any kind can counteract it by going out beyond the territorial boundaries of her village and then returning, on the way finding the two plants *moḷḷe muttu giḍu* and cardamom. She should rub them together in her palms, adding a little water and rabbit dung. Then if she swallows this preventive mixture before nursing the child it will not be affected by the "bad wind."

853 757 755 5.5. There are two medicines that can be administered to a mother if her milk stops flowing because of some frightening experience. The first one applies if her baby is less than four or five months old. The therapist sitting with the mother has a whole lime in one hand and with it some sacred ash (*vibuṭi*) or occasionally wood ash. She moves the lime around clockwise (from her viewpoint) in front of the mother, while saying: "If there is any bad air, or if she has had a fright, may the milk now flow!" The sacred ash is then smeared on the mother's brow and she eats a little of it too. Next the lime is cut in half, and the mother drinks its juice. This procedure is followed every morning for three days. If the baby is older than four months another medicine is given instead. Half a glass of the juice of the cockspur flower is drunk by the mother before each morning meal, for three or five consecutive days.

862 5.6. Before weaning the child is already being fed by hand by some relative and this continues until at about four or five years he feeds himself from a separate plate or leaf. From the start of the third month of life, and certainly before the start of the fifth month, the baby is given solid food. In earlier times more than today this was a good quality of little millet; now good rice is more usual. It is mixed with water or cow's milk—but not buffalo's—and boiled in a small pot (*kuḍikke*) used only for this purpose. A pinch of salt is added and perhaps some butter or clarified butter. The baby is given this once daily during the first month of eating, and thereafter twice daily.

539 862 One proverb exhorts people to be generous in feeding enough to the children: "Neither should the rice become half, nor the sister's children become weak." Or sarcastically, "See that person dance with half-empty stomach!" (Metz 1864: 97). Another refers however to the greediness of some children: "If you give a child, which has scarcely spoiled flour to eat, a cake, it will ask sugar to put upon it" (Metz 1864: 96).

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854 repeatedly saw K. Sithamma at the age of 75 suckling a small
[603] grandchild to quieten it.)

5.13. The arrival of a new baby necessarily brings changes in the
854 sleeping habits of a couple. When it is dusk the door of the house
513 must be closed tight, for fear that a "bad wind" or evil spirit might
342 enter and make the baby sick. This is compulsory until the fifth or
[753] sixth month of life: the door may not be opened again, even momentarily, until just before sunrise. If the father has not yet come home at dusk, then either the baby will go to a neighbouring house for the night or the father will have to sleep in one of them when he returns. In later infancy the door should be closed for the night at about 10 o'clock, and this practice will continue until the child is weaned.

854 When sleeping with her baby a woman's body is entirely nude,
513 for if she wore clothes they would prevent heat from reaching the
855 child from her body. Until a baby is six or seven months old the
[853] mother is advised to sleep with her back to it, and never to sleep while suckling: these precautions result from the fear the child may be suffocated by a breast. Thus if the mother wants to roll over on the bed she must first move the baby over. Usually the youngest one or two children sleep between their parents for warmth, with the unweaned infant always next to the mother. Alternatively mother and baby may use one bed, the father and older children occupying another bed. Sleeping with one's children is not altogether a comfortable situation: "The man who is sleeping with children and the man who is eating raw animal flesh are alike"—both experience difficulties. Other older children in the family may sleep together, but after reaching seven or eight girls sleep separately from their brothers, or else with their mother.

833 5.14. If a mother has intercourse right after giving birth this weakens
834 the womb for the next delivery, Badagas believe, and so they generally do not do it until five or six months afterwards. One man told me he had enjoyed his wife about three weeks after two of his children were born, and the children died after 52 and 54 days, presumably because of the weakening of their mother's milk. Because of such dangers men used to ask a new father in earlier days, "Are you wearing your loincloth at night?" The cloth was considered sufficient restraint on his passion.

half-a-dozen of the common patterns (1876:- 195). These designs, made up of dots, dashes, crescents and circles, were also to be seen on the shoulders of some women, and the forearm and back of the hand were commonly tattooed as well. Although it was obligatory it was never an occasion for ceremony. The technique calls for an older woman, Badaga or otherwise, to etch the pattern on the skin with a thorn from one of two plants, the common Nilgiri barberry or the Bengal currant. Pins and needles are used now. The pigment used is finely powdered charcoal from the bottom of a pot, or else lamp black, mixed with rice gruel (Thurston 1909: 82). Afterwards an oil is put on to the wounds. Rhiem (1900: 504) adds that a silver finger-ring is plunged into a corrosive black liquid and then pressed against tattoo wounds. Shoulder, wrist and hand tattoos may be added later, even after marriage, while a woman is in the menstrual hut. Men are never present for a tattooing.

(*i*) *Milking Initiation.* Nothing ceremonial happens to a boy between his naming and head shaving in infancy, and the initiation into adult work between the ages of seven and nine. This involves his ceremonial milking of a buffalo (Natesa Sastri 1892: 757-58; Francis 1908: 131; Thurston 1909: 87-88; "Miles" 1933: 73).

(*j*) *Lingayat Initiation.* Boys of the several Lingayat clans, including the Woḍeya phratry, undergo a ceremony of investiture of the *linga* at about their 13th year. A *pu:ja* is performed and the boys learn a prayer (Natesa Sastri 1892: 758-60; Thurston 1909: 90-93). Today the ceremony, which is always to be done in an odd-numbered year of a boy's life, occurs even as early as his fifth year.

(*k*) *Puberty Rites.* Menarche is marked by complicated observations, as explained above (3.11); but for a boy's puberty there is no observance whatsoever.

Childhood Maladies

5.23. Whatever may seem to be wrong with an infant it is given no medicines until its fifth month. If necessary before then a medicine may be given to its mother, in the expectation that the child will derive a benefit from it through her milk. This is the case for example if a child is affected by a "bad wind."

In earlier days a thread with 108 knots in it